THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI TAPAN SIKDAR): (a) and (b) Sir, VSNL has full fledged gateway at Calcutta for providing international access to the Eastern Region including the North East. An earth Station at Guwahati is also being set up. At present any ISP can connect their network to Calcutta gateway for international access. As and when Guwahati gateway is comissioned, they will be able to have access from there, as well.

(c) In view of (a) and (b) above, the question does not arise.

(d) VSNL is not in the business of imparting such training.

(e) In view of (d) above, the question does not arise.

Post Offices in the country

†3247. SHRI SATISHCHANDRA SITARAM PRADHAN: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

(a) the number of post offices targetted to be opened in the country during the Ninth Five Year Plan;

(b) whether Government are aware of the fact that the number of post offices is much less in Maharashtra than that of the other States; and

(c) if so, the steps being taken to improve the situation?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI TAPAN SIKDAR): (a) During the Ninth Five Year Plan the proposal is to open 250 Departmental Sub Post Offices and 2500 Extra Departmental Sub Post Offices.

(b) The comparative detail of the number of post offices in the country is given in the Statement (*see* below). The number of Post Offices in Maharashtra is not less than that in other States.

(c) During the current Financial Year, it is proposed to open 2 Departmental Sub Post Offices and 40 Extra Departmental Branch Post Offices in State of Maharashtra. During 1999-2000, a total of 43 Post Offices were opened in the State.

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

Statement

Details of post Offices in Rural and Urban areas and average area and Population served per post office in the country as on 31.3.1999

Sl. No.	Name of Circle	Post Offices in urban areas	Post Offices in rural areas	Total Number of post offices	Average Area served per post office (in Sq. Km)	Average Population served per post office
1	Andhra Pradesh	1338	14848	16186	16.99	4099
2	Assam•	283	3602	3885	20.18	5737
3	Bihar	736	11178	11914	14.6	7247
4	Delhi	474	95	569	2.46	16467
5	Gujarat	863	8097	8960	21.94	4622
	Dadra N. Haveli	1	33	34	14.44	3049
	Daman & Diu	4	13	17	6.59	5975
6	Haryana	331	2306	2637	16.76	6189
7	Himachal Pradesh	120	2644	2764	20.15	1849
8	Jammu & Kashmir	135	1504	1639	135.57	4711
9	Karnataka	1326	8527	9853	19.49	4548
10	Kerala	876	4175	5051	7.72	5757
	Lakshdweep	4	10	14	3.2	5173
11	Madhya Pradesh	1064	10271	11335	39.12	5834
12	Maharashtra	1339	11087	12426	24.76	6337
	Goa	57	96	253	14.62	4624
13	North East					
	Arunachal Pradesh	13	281	294	284.69	2925
	Manipur	47	642	689	32.36	2656
	Meghalaya	33	450	483	46.37	3643
	Mizoram	36	361	397	53.14	1738
	Nagaland	24	296	320	51.56	3812
	Tripura	51	660	711	14.62	3853
14	Orissa	601	7519	8120	19.21	3880
15	Punjab	483	3396	3879	12.99	5370
	Chandigarh	44	8	52	2.28	12818
16	Rajasthan	818	9553	10371	32.99	4231
17	Tamil Nadu	1948	10107	12055	10.78	4615
	Pondicherry	38	57	95	5.26	8526
18	Uttar Pradesh	2084	18139	20223	14.56	6875
19	West Bengal	1106	7516	8622	10.28	7884
	Sikkim	13	191	204	34.8	2009
	A & N Islands	12	85	97	84.53	2886
	TOTAL	16302	137847	154149	21.32	5477